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(Translation specifically requested.)

POSSIBLE SITE OF USSR ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTER -- TANNU TUVA

Translated by Ho Shen

[It is not indicated from what language this article has been translated into the Chinese by Ho Shen.]

Atomic energy research is now engaging the attention of the world's scientists and, of course, Russian scientists are no exception. Research on such a large scale as this, however, necessitates the finest of experimental laboratories, concentration of factories, and even a complete city for purposes of study of nuclear energy. The location of Russia's atomic energy research center has been a mystery. Because of the strict censorship maintained over Russian periodicals, material related to atomic energy is never mentioned in government publications, and even the word "uranium" is not encountered in geological survey reports.

According to deductions based on various forms of factual information, it is very possible that Tannu Tuva has been transformed into the "atomic city" of the Soviet Union. It has a sparse population of approximately 70,000 nomads scattered over a large area.

Tannu Tuva possesses several favorable features as an atomic research center. It is situated in a vast valley between two imposing mountain ridges. These mountain ranges are of such a height that only airplanes equipped with heating apparatus are capable of passing over them. At the most there are only 20 mountain passes connecting the valley with neighboring regions. Of these passes the most favorable for transit purposes are also so extensive that one battalion of well-trained troops could easily contain an entire army within their recesses.

Tannu Tuva's isolation is not the only element rendering it suitable as

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an atomic center. Because of its good climate and fertile soils, it may also be a self-sufficient military, agricultural, and industrial center. Its climate is moderate, with seasonal changes. Its fertile soils produce an abundance of grains, and it is possible for a large number of camels, cattle, sheep, horses and reindeer to graze on the pasture lands.

The topography of Tannu Tuva is varied, giving it the properties of a fortress. Aside from pasturelands, it possesses dense forests and rocky deserts. Many of its valleys are so extensive that it is possible to conceal whole cities so that they may not be discovered by air reconnaissance. In the mountains there are immense caves, some extending a distance of several English miles.

With the exception of desert areas, the water supply is ample. There are several large, deep lakes containing many varieties of fish. There are also many rivers and streams open to shipping and on which hydroelectric stations may be constructed. This is especially true in the valleys, where the banks are high enough to permit the stations to be completely hidden from reconnoitering or attacking aircraft.

There are numerous types of mineral ores to be found in the mountain ranges, including coal (visible at the surface at many places), iron, copper, gold, silver, lead, platinum, iridium, radium, manganese, vanadium, asbestos, mica, graphite, diamonds and other precious stones, pottery clay, and various types of other metals and crystals.

Prior to the time that atomic bombs were released over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Soviet Union indicated that there were large deposits of uranium and other radioactive materials located in the area, but at the present time uranium is no longer mentioned. Although Tannu Tuva is a "top secret" subject in Russia, it is still possible to gain an insight into conditions in that area through chance information released in Soviet newspapers and official reports.

Taking population as an instance, it may be determined from what Mansu-wai-t'o-fu (Mansvetov) has said in various fragmentary reports that the number of Russian citizens in the area has greatly increased and that the native population is also being Sovietized. Not long ago, Tannu Tuva's only city was its capital, K'en-mi-pi-ch'i-erh (Kizil Khoto), with a population of 2,000, and the number of Russians scattered over the whole area, amounted to less than 20,000.

However, if we examine in detail the laws and decrees of the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, the situation is different.

Tannu Tuva is divided into 17 electoral districts and four cities, K'en-mi-pi-ch'i-erh (Kizil Khoto), Ch'a-tun, Tu-nan, and Sha-ke-no-erh. The centers for the other electoral districts are classified as villages. As an author for the Soviet Union Review has said, "This matter is extremely important, for as we know this nomadic land never before contained so many villages." The inference here is that these villages could have been established only by the immigration of Russian citizens and that the number of these colonists from the outside already surpasses the former number of native inhabitants in Tannu Tuva.

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There are also other points which may be considered. It is now known that there are steamboats navigating the rivers of Tannu Tuva and that dredging operations have been carried on for several years. There are only two possibilities in answer to the question of the means by which these steamboats and dredgers were transported to that region. Either they were dismantled and transported overland or they travelled under their own power up the Yenisei River. If the shipping equipment has been transported overland, it may be inferred that Russia has constructed a railroad in that hinterland, so unfamiliar to the people of the world; if under their own power, the Yenisei River has been improved to permit navigation.

In the reports mentioned earlier, fuller mention has been made that Tannu Tuva is being supplied with electricity from power plants, with more plants in the process of being constructed, and that it possesses both hydraulic and fuel power. Dam construction and expansion of mineral production are also indicated in the reports. In the daily log of a scientific investigation group, special reference is also made to proposed vehicular traffic on Tannu Tuva roads.

Development of agriculture is not a complete secret. According to the results of an investigation, there are 15 million acres (English measure) which could easily be brought under cultivation. State and collective farms have been established in many places, and mechanized equipment has been put into use.

The extent to which Russia is emphasizing Tannu Tuva may be seen in the expanding amount of men and finances being extended for purposes of investigation. We know that in the past year alone at least 32 large-scale research groups and five survey units were dispatched to this area to search for metallic mineral deposits. These groups were all led by men famous in the fields of engineering and science.

In any discussion of whether or not Russia has a real atomic city, Tannu Tuva is to be considered a logical location. Within that area there is uranium and the necessary resources for industrial development. It is the most secluded and easily defended area in all the Soviet Union; a resolute garrison force, relying on its own resources could withstand the military strength of an aggressor many times its own size for an indefinite period. It is even possible for Tannu Tuva to withstand hostile stratospheric bombers armed with atomic weapons.

Any description of Tannu Tuva as the site of an atomic research center can, of course, only be general, since until Russia lifts its curtain of secrecy, its exact nature remains unknown to the outer world.

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